

## Two New Whale Records from Victoria

*Mesoplodon bowdoini* Andrews (Ziphiidae) and  
*Balaenoptera edeni* Anderson (Balaenopteridae).

by JOAN M. DIXON\*

### Summary

In 1968 two whales belonging to species hitherto unknown from Victorian waters were stranded on the Victorian coast to the south west of Melbourne. These have been identified as the beaked whale *Mesoplodon bowdoini* (Andrews' Beaked Whale) and the baleen whale *Balaenoptera edeni* (Bryde's Whale).

*Mesoplodon bowdoini* Andrews, 1908, Andrews' Beaked Whale. (Plates 1-4.)

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This specimen, an adult female, was washed up on the beach near Hordern Vale at the mouth of the Aire River (Lat. 38°47'S, Long. 144°23'E) in May, 1968. Photographs taken by local schoolteacher Mr. K. Taylor, and by Mr. C. Marriner of Hordern Vale were sent to Mr. N. A. Wakefield of Melbourne. He recognised the specimen as a beaked whale and contacted me about this matter. I visited the locality on 13 May, 1968. By this time local residents had buried the whale in the sand, but it was possible



Plate 1

*Mesoplodon bowdoini* (Andrews' Beaked Whale) female, stranded at Hordern Vale, Victoria, May, 1968. Nat. Mus. Vict. reg. no. C8442.

Photo: K. Taylor.

to uncover, examine and photograph the head. The tongue was badly swollen, which made examination of the jaws difficult, but as far as could be determined at that stage, the specimen was a beaked whale, *Mesoplodon* sp. No teeth could be felt projecting through the gumline of either jaw. In July, 1968, I returned to the area and with the assistance of Mr. Marrison removed the head from the body, and rough-cleaned the skull. It was badly fractured, the rostrum broken

off from the main part of the cranium, pterygoids fractured, and mandibles shattered, particularly in the region of the angle. The skull was taken to the museum and preparation completed. The presence of a single pair of mandibular teeth was noted. The position of each tooth, near the posterior union of the symphysis, and the shape of each tooth indicated that the specimen was a female *Mesoplodon bowdoini*.

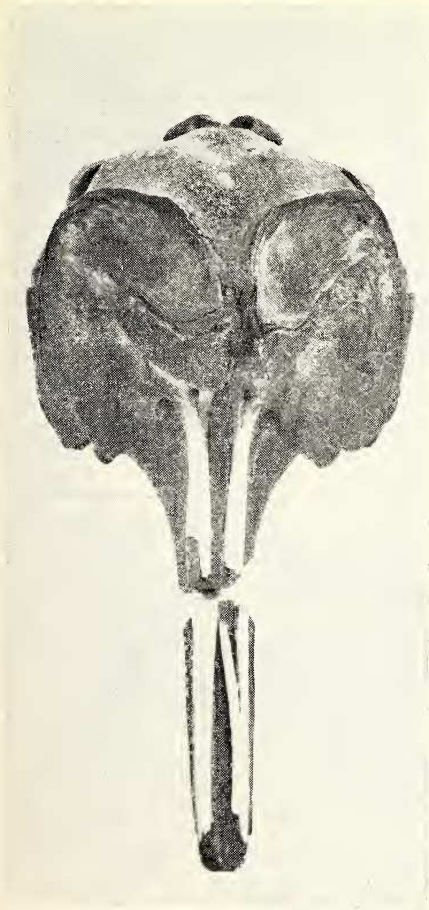


Plate 2  
*Mesoplodon bowdoini* C8442. Dorsal view of skull.

Photo: F. Guy.



Plate 3  
*Mesoplodon bowdoini* C8442. Ventral view of skull.

Photo: F. Guy.

The rest of the carcass was left to decompose in the sand and the site was revisited in December, 1968. By this time the shifting sand had uncovered some of the caudal vertebrae, and it was possible to recover a large proportion of the skeleton. Skull and skeleton are now housed in the National Museum of Victoria, registered No. C8442.

Measurements in cm.

Body length 394 (taken by Mr. K. Taylor, May, 1968.)

Skull dimensions:

Maximum length	68.5*
Maximum length of rostrum (tip to line connecting antorbital notches)	38.5*
Tip rostrum to anterior margin superior nares	47.0*
Maximum breadth across zygomatic processes of squamosals	34.7
Maximum breadth foramen magnum	10.7
Maximum breadth across exoccipitals	28.6
Width rostrum in apices antorbital notches	20.6
Width rostrum in apices prominent notches	16.2
Maximum transverse width of superior nares	4.8
Least distance between maxillary foramina	7.7
Least distance between premaxillary foramina	3.8
Maximum depth at occipitals	34.0
Maximum depth at pterygoids	27.4*
Width rostrum (middle)	5.7
Depth rostrum (middle)	7.4
Length mandibular symphysis	11.31*

(\*indicates that measurement is incomplete due to skull damage).

Tooth measurements (tooth from right mandible)

Height at anterior face 6.1 cm.

Height at posterior face 5.02 cm.

Length of base 4.78 cm.

Remarks: Guiler (1967) has recorded a skull of *M. bowdoini* from Marion Bay, Tasmania. Gaskin (1968) mentions that in the Southern Hemisphere, *Mesoplodon bowdoini* has been recorded from New Zealand as far south as Stewart Island and from Bunbury, Western Australia (Glauert, 1947). The above Hordern Vale specimen appears to constitute the first Victorian record of this species..

Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera edeni* Anderson 1878. (Plates 5-8.)

On 25 July, 1968, another whale was stranded on the Victorian coast, on this occasion at the mouth of Limeburner Creek, Corio Bay, (Lat. 38° 04'S, Long. 144° 24'E).

It was examined by Mr. R. Bickerdike of the Geelong Church of England Grammar School, who took photographs, made observations and measurements. The following information was supplied by Mr. Bickerdike.



Plate 4  
*Mesoplodon bowdoini* C8442. Lateral aspect of tooth from right mandible.

Photo: F. Guy.



Plate 5

*Balaenoptera edeni* (Bryde's Whale) young male, stranded at Corio Bay, Victoria, July 1968. Nat. Mus. Vic. reg. no. C8441.

Photo: R. Bickerdike.

“Tip of snout to centre of flukes	21'
Tip of snout to dorsal fin	13' 8"
Tip of snout to flippers	6'
Length of flipper	2'
Width across flukes	4' 10"
Approximate girth (by flippers)	9' 6"

Dorsal side was a blue-grey while the non-pigmented area on the ventral side extended through to the tail. There was no ridging on the back. Flippers were blue-grey above and grey-white below. Ventral grooves extended as far as the navel. I could not detect any slit in the hinder margin of the dorsal fin.”

From the photos taken by Mr. Bickerdike and officers of the Fisheries and Wildlife Department, the three longitudinal ridges on the snout indicated that this was a Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera edeni*. The specimen was a young male.

The skull and the baleen plates were obtained for the museum collections, registered No. C8441. The baleen plates numbered approximately 260 on each side. They were grey-black in colour with yellowish-white bristles, the longer ones being fairly stiff, thick and uncurled. The largest plate was 12.5 cm. long excluding bristles, and 10 cm. wide at the base. Bristles on the baleen were somewhat finer than those on specimens re-

corded from Western Australia by Chittleborough (1959). However, Chittleborough and Dawbin (pers. comm. 1968) concurred in the opinion that the specimen was a Bryde's Whale and attributed the fineness of the baleen to the fact that the specimen was a juvenile.



Plate 6

*Balaenoptera edeni* C8441. Dorsal view of head showing the three diagnostic longitudinal ridges.

Photo: R. Bickerdike

Skull measurements in cm.

Length of skull from posterior margin of condyles to tips premaxillae	139
Greatest breadth of skull	61
Breadth of rostrum basally	36
Anterior margin of nasals to tips of premaxillae	83.5
Length of premaxillae	92
Length of nasals mesially—	
right side	10
left side	10.5
Length of nasals laterally—	
right side	13
left side	13

Breadth of nasals, anteriorly—

right side	4.5
left side	4
Maximum height of skull	32
Length of mandible	124
Depth of mandible	19

*Remarks:* This is the only known record of *Balaenoptera edeni* from eastern Australia. The species has been recorded from Shark Bay, Western Australia, by Chittleborough (1959). Gaskin (1968) mentions several New Zealand records, none of these occurring further south than East Cape, Lat. 37°30'S. Long. 178°30'E.

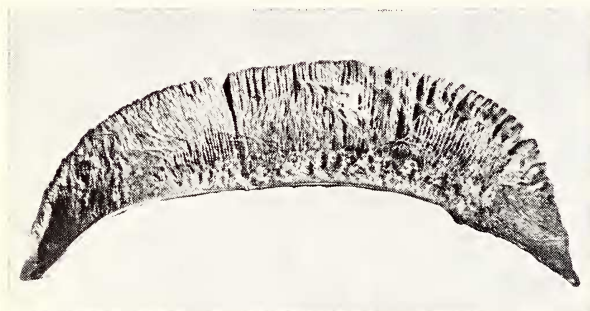


Plate 7  
*Balaenoptera edeni* C8441, entire baleen of one side.  
Photo: F. Guy.

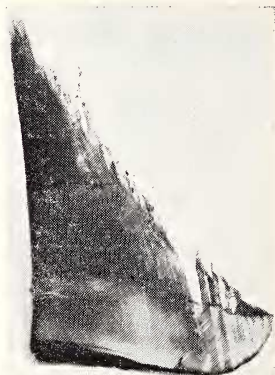


Plate 8  
*Balaenoptera edeni* C8441. Single baleen plate.  
Photo: F. Guy.

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### Geology Group Excursions

**Sunday, 5 April**—To Waurin Ponds and other localities in the Geelong area.  
Leader—Mr. Stan Rowe.

**Sunday, 10 May**—To Airey's Inlet. Leader—Mr. George Carlos.

**Sunday, 7 June**—To Maribyrnong River Terraces. Leader—Mr. Dan McInnes.

Transport is by private car (spare seats available). Excursions leave from the western end of Flinders Street Station, opposite the C.T.A. Building, at 9.30 a.m.